

# The Newsletter of the Old Girls' Association

# Cloisters



No. 2 Spring 2013

## LHS in the 1920s

### *The memories of Old Girl, Jessie Long*

LHS old girl, Jessie Long (Holmes; 1922-28), who is 101 years old, has kindly shared with us her fascinating memories of life at LHS during the 20s. Laura Dickinson (1992-99) and current LHS pupil Seun Matiluko report.

#### *About Jessie*

As a child, Jessie lived with her parents on Albert Promenade in Loughborough, "a very nice road, lined with trees". Her father was a woodworker at Herbert Morris – a successful engineering firm on Empress Road in Loughborough. Jessie attended LHS on a 'Fearon scholarship' (it would have cost Jessie's parents 3 guineas per year under normal circumstances).

After leaving school, Jessie also joined Herbert Morris, in the drawing office. It was her task to use Indian ink to trace the engineers' designs onto a linen tracing cloth of pale blue, hence the word 'blueprint'. It was here that she met her engineer husband, Frank; the couple had a daughter, Judith and Jessie now has 2 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

#### *The Uniform*

Jessie remembers feeling "very proud" of her school uniform: a pleated navy gym tunic, a cream or white blouse, gloves ("the reputation of the school was very high and Miss Bristol insisted that we wore them"), a red tie and black stockings with suspenders. The girls were also required to change from their outdoor shoes; once inside the building gym shoes or soft leather shoes with a small heel were the usual choices. During Jessie's school days, the four school houses were very important; each girl wore a braided belt knotted at one side of their tunic, the colour signifying which house they belonged to.



*Jessie at school*

#### *Teachers & lessons*

Miss Bristol, who was the Headmistress during Jessie's time at the School, also taught History. Jessie recalls that despite the fact she was very strict, she always made the lessons really interesting. She describes Miss Rose, the Art Mistress as "a dumpy little old lady" and of Miss McKenzie, the French Mistress, she says, with a smile on her face, "a dragon...Scottish... she had a blazing temper and lost it regularly!" Jessie also has less than fond memories of her gym Mistress, Miss Gandon, who had favourites ("and I wasn't one of them") and "didn't entertain anyone who wasn't good at gym!" She has a great memory for names and details, remembering Miss Roper (Deputy Head – "very tall"), Miss Netherwood (Mathematics), Miss Sheldon (Science & Botany), Miss Martin (Domestic Science), Miss Woodhead (English, Scripture) and Miss Salkeld (French).

#### *LHS friends*

Jessie remembers many of her classmates very clearly. In particular she recalls a deputy head girl of the School, Nora Burrows, whose sister Louie was at University in Nottingham with the author DH Lawrence. Louie and Lawrence were engaged until he met and began an affair with Frida, the German wife of a fellow at the university! Louie later became Headmistress at Quorn Junior School.



A boarder at the School, Monica Sharpe, lived in Colwyn Bay and invited 8 girls to view a total eclipse of the sun from her family's house. Unfortunately Jessie was not one of the chosen few, which, in the end, was bearable, since there was so much cloud, the eclipse wasn't visible! Monica married the brother of the French mistress, Miss Salkeld.

#### *Some firsts for the School*

Whilst Jessie was at school, what we all now know as the school hymn was composed by Reverend Canon Briggs, whose daughter was in her form. The school hymn is now reserved for special occasions, such as the Burton Service; it must have been so exciting for Jessie to sing a new hymn during hymn practice; this hymn has great importance and brings back fond memories for so many Old Girls now, I wonder if Jessie felt that same attachment to it then?

The Christmas tableaux were introduced in 1923, when Jessie was in the Lower Fourth; for so many girls these were highlights of their School career (see our interview with 1999 leaver, Louisa Blackmore); it's somehow reassuring to know how fondly and clearly Jessie also remembers them. Jessie also recalls a fete, organised in 1928 by LHS and LGS, to raise funds for an outdoor swimming pool. She recalls that she was in charge of the lucky dip. This was the first time Jessie remembers being allowed to 'fraternise' with the boys! Fund raising is something current girls still enjoy, although now they donate to charities.



*Jessie at eighteen*

It seems that Jessie was fully involved in LHS life and was essentially the perfect student – proud of the school, enthusiastic, intelligent, strong of will and strong of mind. Just as many girls have done since, Jessie enjoyed learning, forming strong friendships, and taking part in the wider life of the school. She matured throughout her LHS career into a young, intelligent woman and took away with her many fond and interesting memories. We hope that many other girls will have the opportunity to do the same.

To read more of Jessie's memories, please visit the website [www.olaoga.co.uk](http://www.olaoga.co.uk) or contact us for a printed copy.

# Food at LHS: *moving with the times!*

Megan Reilly took up the post of Head of Food at LHS in 1986; since then she has seen many changes...

*Arriving at LHS, after Margaret Bradley's retirement in 1986, was like stepping back in time! Miss Harvatt's study was warm and cosy and Gretel, her yellow Labrador, lay peacefully in front of the coal fire. As my training at that time was unconventional, Miss Harvatt asked if I would bring some garments to my interview – she was obviously doubtful about my ability to teach needlework!*

In 1986 the food room was small, there were few appliances and microwave cookers were relatively new. The A level students had a 3 hour practical examination which was assessed by an external examiner. Dishes were displayed on white linen with their mother's best china. It would not be unusual in the following days to find bags of chopped vegetables and extra pastry hidden at the back of cupboards in case of any emergencies during the examination!



*The Food Room in the late 1940s, with Miss Martin.*

As the demands of the curriculum changed and class sizes increased to 22, the small store room adjacent to the balcony was removed and the food room extended on to the flat roof. Some of you will remember the classroom adjacent to the food room as the geography or textiles room. Several years ago the department expanded and this room is now used for most of our food theory lessons.

There was tremendous excitement last spring when it was announced that the food room – which had served us well but was very tired and outdated – was to be refurbished. The planning process was enjoyable; there was much discussion and several visits to other schools to obtain ideas. Units were ripped out, the floor covering taken up and the old cream and green tiles hidden under the sink units were chipped from the walls; fortunately the mouse nest which we discovered appeared to be decades old!



*In the 1970s, with Margaret Bradley.*

The new room is impressive and both staff and students are enjoying the lovely new facilities. We have induction hobs, commercial fridges, where temperatures are recorded daily, coloured coded chopping boards and endless appliances ranging from food processors to smoothie makers.

## What other changes have we seen?

As many of the maintained schools were introducing food technology, we decided to offer this subject for GCSE in addition to Food and Nutrition. The girls who took this course were extremely successful; one former student now runs her own factory in Leicester, producing Indian ready-meals for a large numbers of delis throughout the UK

In order that girls gain a formal qualification in food, we have introduced the CIEH Healthier Food and Special Diets level 2 Award in the Upper Fourth, which is proving very popular. We also provide opportunities for 6th formers to learn about diet and cooking in preparation for university life and beyond. Our students have attended the annual British Nutrition Foundation Award Days at the Royal College of Physicians in London for several years, winning prizes at both GCSE and A level.

We have had similar successes in the Rotary Young Chef and Waitrose Milk Challenge competitions. Emma de Sallis Young performed particularly well to reach the finals in London, later featuring in the Good Food Magazine.



*The newly refurbished room.*

## Beyond the Classroom

We are continually trying to raise awareness of the tremendous career opportunities relating to food and have welcomed former students to speak at careers events. Students taking A level Food have pursued a wide range of careers, ranging from medicine, physiotherapy and environmental health to marketing and retail. Our numbers are healthy and it is our hope that we will continue to inspire girls to work in this field.

Outside of lessons, girls have made mini Christmas cakes for local elderly people and the Salvation Army, run a lunch time baking club for younger pupils, and prepared food for charity fund raising events. Local chefs have visited the department to run master classes and we regularly take examination classes to the Good Food Show at the NEC.

Food issues such as B.S.E., salmonella, E. coli and the recent horse meat scandal, have highlighted once more the considerable number of people who depend so heavily on ready meals, no longer having the necessary skills and knowledge to prepare their own meals. Coupled with the increasing concern about obesity, osteoporosis and other diet related conditions, the need for food and nutrition education has never been greater.

**Megan Reilly**  
Head of Food, LHS.

I would welcome any other memories that you may have about the food room or food lessons. Please email: at [m.reilly@leshigh.org](mailto:m.reilly@leshigh.org)

*You can read an extended version of this article online [www.olaoga.co.uk](http://www.olaoga.co.uk)*

## Meet the OGA Committee



**Jane Matthews**  
(Chair)



**Laura Dickinson**  
(Vice Chair)



**Janice Riddle**  
(Treasurer)



**Jenny Woods**  
(Secretary)

# The Loughborough Dinner 2013



In March, the Old Girls' Association and the Old Loughburians' Association held their third Loughborough Dinner in the Grammar School's Burton Hall. This event, which followed on the heels of the very successful Dinners of 2011 and 2012, provided a relaxed and enjoyable evening for former students and current and former staff to catch up with news, and reminisce about their experiences at school. Earlier in the evening, several people joined tours of the schools to see the latest developments.

The speaker was Giles Kristian, formerly Giles Upton, and an Old Boy of Loughborough Grammar School (1987 – 94). His speech was entertaining and provided an insight into his very varied life

experiences, ranging from pop stardom to becoming a best selling author. It was clear that Giles has not wasted a moment of his life so far. Who knows what he has set his sights on for future decades?

Year on year the Loughborough Dinner is growing in popularity and proving to be a special occasion in the calendar for both associations. The event is open to everyone who has ever attended or taught at the Loughborough Endowed Schools and it is hoped that more members of the Old Girls' Association will attend in future years.

**Jane A Matthews**  
*Chair of the Old Girls' Committee*

## 1951-58 Leavers' Reunion - Still Going Strong!

Following our very successful 50th Anniversary Reunion in 2006, it was decided that there was no reason why those of us who still lived in the area, some having since moved back, shouldn't meet on an annual basis as there was such a lot of catching-up to be done! Each spring, the not-too-far-flung of us, gather at Longcliffe Golf Club to share a lunch together to catch up on the year's events and to listen to a little more of each others' stories since leaving school all those years ago.

Over the years the weather has been exceptionally kind to us and we have enjoyed our pre-lunch drinks sitting out on the terrace, soaking up much needed sunshine and Vitamin D. However last year we were not so fortunate and so were glad to take advantage of the cosiness of the Clubhouse bar before we went in for our meal. Each year we have enjoyed the company of staff from the High School and the Development Office – we were delighted to welcome the now former Headmistress, Biddie O'Connor and more recently Gwen Byrom, the new Headmistress, to the group. Susie Bromwich, Eloise Hipwell and more recently Hannah Wyatt from the Development Office have been loyal supporters at all these events.

The Group consists of about twenty or so 'Old Girls', some of whom live locally and others who converge from further afield; Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Norfolk, West Midlands and the Cambridge areas. It's hardly surprising that, after leaving school 55 years ago, there is so much of interest to learn from one another as we discover the fascinating paths down which our different careers have led us. As well as being an inspiration to one another, we can be encouraging and supportive as we come to terms with what it means to become more 'senior'! We can pass on tips for finding ways of overcoming the various health issues which begin to beset us; all very practical and with the potential to be very enriching, in a way that was not always possible in immature youth!

Our thanks to Jane Matthews, who has a gift for enabling such good things to happen! So successful have these gatherings proved to be, that we have decided to have twice-a-year get-togethers and we are already looking forward to our next one in October. Our only regret is that, due to living further afield, more friends are not able to join us.

*Jill Johnson (was Whitworth) 1951 – 1958*



**The Old Girls' Association  
AGM**  
**Sunday 30th June  
2.15pm**  
**Cope Boarders' Common Room, LHS**

You are warmly invited to attend, and to join us afterwards at the Garden Party at Number 2, Burton Walks, from 3pm. Tickets for the Garden Party are complimentary but numbers are limited so please let Hannah Wyatt know by 21st June if you'd like to join us.

See the Events section on the back page for contact details and details of how to buy tickets for the Music School Al Fresco Concert, taking place on the same day.

## Twenty Year Reunion



The 1992 Leavers held their 20 year reunion in September 2012. There was a drinks reception, preceded by tours of the respective Schools, followed by dinner in the Hodson Hall. 51 people attended including Old Girls, Old Loughburians and current and former staff.

## Cycle Challenge

Despite the cold and lashing rain Sunday 23rd September 2012 saw parents, students, staff and Old Loughburians complete the Schools Cycle Challenge. They joined other cyclists from Ratcliffe College and Oakham School. The route took them over the 5,300-foot climb across Charnwood Forest with the final stretch through the hills around Oakham. Almost £10,000 was raised for the Leicester Hospitals Our Space Appeal, and over £2,000 raised for the Schools' fund.

## Evensong at Worcester Cathedral

In November 2012, the Burton Consort and Choristers sang Choral Evensong at Worcester Cathedral. Afterwards a group of around thirty-five Old Girls, Old Loughburians and staff attended a drinks reception in the grounds of the Cathedral.

## Oxbridge Dinner

The 5th Annual Oxbridge Dinner, which proved to be the most popular to date, took place in January at Jesus College, Cambridge. 57 people attended including Old Girls, Old Boys and staff.



# Profile

## Louisa Blackmore



Louisa Blackmore (was Eggleston; 1992-1999) owns West Egg Interiors – an online store – and runs workshops in furniture restoration & painting.

I don't know who was more shocked by my A level results: my teachers, my parents or me. When I opened them I could see the subjects listed, with 'A' next to them, which I assumed meant "A" Level. I started feeling really panicky, thinking I had done so badly I just hadn't even achieved a grade. Then Mrs Atherton explained I had got 3 As. I was predicted a B and 2 Cs so that was a big surprise!

I went off travelling during my gap year, which was unplanned, but a really brilliant experience and I'm so glad I did it. I had a place at UCL to study philosophy and politics, but withdrew once I received my results, so that I could apply to Durham to study Law.

All my school reports said variations of "Louisa needs to apply herself". I was pretty useless at school until the Upper Fifth. I'm not sure what the turning point was, possibly just years of encouragement from various teachers, but I did start to apply myself and it paid off.



panel for 'Period Homes & Interiors' magazine. We've just opened our first studio and workshop in a converted barn in Blunham, Bedfordshire, where we have a shop and studio for our courses. The blog I write for West Egg has opened up so many doors for me, including speaking at international blogging conferences and being invited to attend New York design week to cover the events and shows taking place.

I'm a control freak, so I like being the boss of my own business! I love being able to choose my hours (although they are longer than I would like), travelling around the UK, the US and Europe, and meeting so many amazing and inspirational people.

My time at LHS absolutely helped me to become who I am now. My philosophy since school has been 'the more you put in, the more you get out' - simple but true, whether applied to work, study, relationships or friendships. I never thought I would be in this position and I feel incredibly lucky.

Find out more about West Egg Interiors at [www.westegg.co.uk](http://www.westegg.co.uk)



I assumed every school had Christmas tableaux, until I went to university and realised they were the exception rather than the rule. I loved being part of the tableaux; I was one of the three kings, which was really fun except for the grey beard. I now realize how unique and special they are. I'd love to come back and see one again.

After graduating from Durham, I wasn't really sure I wanted to be a solicitor and I didn't have a training contract, so I went to work at Allen & Overy as a paralegal to see what was involved. The hours were long and the work was beyond tedious, but it was fun living in London with some friends from school. After 3 years, I started working on the legal desk for a hedge fund, which was amazing. I learnt a huge amount and I was lucky to be able to travel and have some brilliant experiences.

On a flight to America in March 2010, I turned off my Blackberry and realised I was the happiest I'd been in months. Although I had enjoyed the hedge fund life to start with, I still felt something was missing. Also, I was getting fed up working behind a desk all day. On a flight to America in March 2010, I turned off my Blackberry and realised I was the happiest I'd been in months. By October, I had left my job in favour of doing something more creative – setting up West Egg Interiors, an idea that had been at the back of my mind since 2008.

I never thought I would have the guts to actually quit my job and do it, but it suddenly dawned on me: if I didn't do it then I probably never would, and that terrified me more than the thought of failing. Whilst working my notice period, I spent most evenings and weekends doing research on competitors, trends, online stores and pricing. I also did a course in traditional furniture restoration with a 4th generation master restorer in Cornwall.

West Egg Interiors is now an award-winning online store; it is regularly featured in the national interiors press and I am on the expert

## It's All Change at the Development Office!

It's with mixed emotions that we report that there have been some major staff changes at the Development Office.

Susie Bromwich, the Director of Development and External Relations, moves to a new appointment as Director of Development at King's Ely. Susie joined the staff at LES in 2008 and was responsible for the initial establishment and subsequent growth and support of the LES Development Programme. She has worked closely with the OGA, the OLA and with the four schools, planning and implementing a wide range of initiatives at both regional and local level. She leaves behind a legacy of a well-established Development Programme. In particular the OGA owes a great deal to Susie and is very appreciative of her ideas and encouragement and constant support in helping to move the Association forward into a new era. We shall miss her energy and enthusiasm. Susie starts her new post in May and we wish her happiness and every success for the future.

We also say goodbye to Mark Sampson who recently left to join the staff at Nottingham University as Data Manager working with a team managing data for a research project on stroke victims. He has been at the Development Office since it first started and he has been the person on

## Future Events

For more details please visit [www.olaoga.co.uk](http://www.olaoga.co.uk)  
email [events@lesbursary.co.uk](mailto:events@lesbursary.co.uk)  
or contact Hannah Wyatt  
in the LES Development Office  
01509 638920

### June

#### Thursday 6th

Evening Drinks by the Thames,  
London Rowing Club, Putney, 6.30pm

#### Saturday 15th

2003 Leavers' Ten Year Reunion,  
Loughborough Endowed Schools,  
7.00pm

#### Sunday 30th

Loughborough Endowed Schools  
Music School Al Fresco Concert

### September

#### Saturday 14th

1993 Leavers' Twenty Year Reunion,  
Loughborough Endowed Schools

#### Saturday 21st

1984 Leavers' 'Nearly 30 Years'  
Reunion, Loughborough Endowed  
Schools

For all information and bookings  
regarding music events:  
[www.lesmusic.org](http://www.lesmusic.org)

whom we have relied for creating the appropriate systems to manage the essential data we have needed. He has always been the "calm voice at the end of the phone"! We thank him for all his hard work and send him our good wishes for the future.

Polly Burdell, who has been a great help assisting Susie and her team, has taken a break to travel round the world for three months. However she will be back with us at the beginning of June to help with the end of term events. We would like to wish her "Bon Voyage" and look forward to her safe return.

We extend a big welcome to Hannah Wyatt who joined the Development Office Team in August 2012 as Personal Assistant to the Director of Development and External Relations. She moved from her previous post as an Administrative Manager at Shelter Cymru based in North Wales. Hannah has already established herself as a valuable member of the Team and has been working closely with the Old Girls' Association. We wish her a warm welcome, albeit rather belatedly, and look forward to continuing our close working relationship.

Jane A Matthews  
Chair of the Old Girls' Committee



Susie



Mark



Polly



Hannah

## Could you contribute to the Cloisters newsletter?

Memories, a book review, tales of travels, career choices, opinion pieces...whatever you have to say, we want to hear it!

Contact the Newsletter Team: Laura Dickinson, Jenny Woods and Janice Riddle

Please direct any comments or contributions to: Laura Dickinson Email: [oganews@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oganews@yahoo.co.uk)  
Tel: 07734 176284 or 01509 889682 or Write: 114 Main Street, Willoughby on the Wolds, Leics. LE12 6SZ

To change the way you receive the newsletter, contact the Secretary, Jenny Woods [lhsogasec@gmx.com](mailto:lhsogasec@gmx.com)